DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 151 037 JC 780 125

AUTHOR	Dennison, John D.
TITLE	British Columbia Colleges Articulation Study: University-Transfer Programs in the Community Colleges. A 1977 Perspective.
INSTITUTION	B. C. Research, Vancouver (British Columbia).
REPORT NO	5-04-524
PUB DATE	Nov 77
NOTE	21p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Achievement; Community Colleges; *Enrollment Rate; Higher Education; *Junior Colleges; Junior College Students; Liberal Arts Majors; Research Reviews (Publications); Statistical Data; *Transfer Students; *Universities
IDENTIFIERS	*British Columbia; *Student Objectives

ABSTRACT

In view of the increasing emphasis on career/technical programs in British Columbia community colleges and the growing criticism of academic transfer programs in such institutions, university transfer enrollment statistics were analyzed along with existing research on student goals and objectives. Results showed that the proportion of community college students enrolled in university transfer curricula has remained fairly constant, at about 67%, since 1972. In fall 1976, the number of community college transfers enrolled in British Columbia universities approximated 15.4% of the previous year's total community college transfer program enrollment and 31.4% of full-time transfer program enrollment. However, several studies have shown that only half of community college transfer program students ever intend to continue on to university full-time, many intend to combine work and further education, and a sizable percentage have no definite plans. Interpreted on the basis of student intent, transfer rates reach much more acceptable levels. In addition, the evaluation of such programs simply on the transfer rate disregards the changing nature of community college students and the diversity of their needs and goals. Clearly, a liberal arts program serves a wide variety of purposes--community demand, personal satisfaction, opportunity for mature adults, a testing ground of one's academic interests--and must be understood in that light. (TR)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED151037

Report #26

British Columbia Colleges Articulation Study:

University-Transfer Programs in the Community College

- A 1977 Perspective -

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

John D. Dennison

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

by

John D. Dennison

University of British Columbia

November, 1977

#5-04-524

JC 780 125

University-Transfer Programs in the Community College

- A 1977 Perspective -

Background

The community college concept, as it has evolved in British Columbia, is notably dissimilar in several respects to its counterpart in the other provinces of Canada. From their inception, the B.C. colleges have emphasized community involvement, both through the mode of financing and by the structure of governance.

Local financial support, raised through school taxes, has contributed approximately 30% of the operating budgets of the colleges. Direct community representation on college councils has been ensured through a process by which cooperating school boards have each contributed at least one member.

Although the Colleges and Provincial Institutes Act of 1977 will effect significant changes in both examples cited above, the British Columbia colleges will attempt to continue a community orientation.

In terms of curriculum, the colleges in the province have consistently emphasized a comprehensive approach. A program balance between "academic" or "university transfer" and "technical-career" has occurred in each college from its establishment. Subsequently, vocational, trade and continuing education programs have been incorporated into the college curriculum.

As the evolutionary process has taken place, certain changes in the character of the college student population have followed. In the early years college students were generally "college-age" and entered directly from secondary school. As a result of a variety of factors, including a

recognition of the colleges' responsibilities towards the adult population, a declining population of traditional post-secondary students and a significant increase in college programs leading to employment, approximately half the college student population in 1977 is from a mature age group.

At the same time, there has been a general disillusionment, expressed through the media, with the academic programs of the college. Unemployment statistics reflect the lack of employability of graduates from these programs. In effect, the dominant philosophy of the community college has shifted from its original academic orientation to its role as an essential component in the long-term economic plan for the future of the province.

Understandably, there is considerable concern within the college community, particularly among the academic faculty, with the apparent widespread lack of sympathy, even antagonism, with the notion of liberal studies or intellectual quality of education. Among the current viewpoints on academic programs are those which suggest that the budgetary demands are indefensible, to others which imply that such programs are properly the business of the universities and should be relegated to the latter.

Indeed, it is unusual to find any reference in current literature to the long-accepted proposition that the community college is the logical location for the idealized curricular mesh between vocational training and academic studies which would contribute much to the development of an educated citizenry. In an era when the emphasis upon participatory democracy demands a high quality of critical understanding on the part of its citizens, an anti-intellectual viewpoint is difficult to understand.

Nevertheless, it seems appropriate to make some critical analysis of the so-called "university transfer" student in the community college.

Perhaps it is time to reconsider the traditional assumptions made about these students, their goals and expectations, and their behavior over time. Such analysis must involve empirical data, together with a certain amount of educated reflection upon questions for which no such data are available.

University Transfer Enrollments and Transfer Rates to University

An analysis of enrollment trends in the various college programs over the past few years gives some indication of the status of the university-transfer component of the college. Despite the widespread view that the proportion of students in this program has declined, the reduction is by no means as great as is generally believed. In fact; the proportion of the total enrollment in university-transfer programs has remained fairly constant since 1972 (see Table I.). Evidently, the academic curriculum is still the prime attraction for approximately two-thirds of the students attending the community colleges.

The question arising from these data, which is perhaps the most important to students of the community college concept, is as follows. What percentage of the university-transfer population is actually transferring to a university?

Although an accurate answer to this question is virtually impossible to obtain, a reasonable estimate was made by using the following procedure:

- The numbers of transfer students, by college, who entered U.B.C., S.F.U. and U.Vic. for the first time in September 1976 with some transfer credit were obtained from university files (Table 2.);

- The numbers of students enrolled in B.C. public colleges in university-transfer programs in October 1975, both full and part-time, were made available from the Ministry of Education (Table 3.);

TABLE 1.

*University Transfer and *Career-Technical Students in B.C. Colleges

1968 - 76

Year	University Transfer	Career - Technical	Total	University Transfer as % of Total
1968	5,186	765	5,951	87.1
1969	5,615	1,165	6,780	82.8
1970	8,361	2,744	11,105	75.3
1971	9,036	4,025	13,061	69.2
1972	8,404	4,635	13,039	64.5
1973	10,019	5,365	15,384	65.1
1974	13,418	6,077	19,495	68.8
1975	14,813	7,101	21,944	67.5
1976	16,019	7,530	23,549	68.0

*Figures include both full time and part time students.

Vocational students are not included.

Source: B.C. Ministry of Education, Educational Data Services
B.C. Post-Secondary Education Statistics, 1977

- The figures in Table 2 and Table 3 were compared (Table 4). Before drawing any conclusions from the data, the following caveats must be considered:

1. The figures include only students who transferred to British Columbia universities. No information is available on those students transferring to universities in other provinces or countries;
2. It may be argued that "part-time" college students would not be "eligible" to transfer to university in the following year;
3. Students enrolling in the university with college transfer credits may, or may not, have come directly from colleges in the previous year. In this study, an assumption has been made that transfer is direct from college to university;
4. Figures on college enrollments include both first and second year U.T. students on the assumption that they could transfer after either year;
5. Experience in the past has shown that university registrar figures are not always accurate;
6. The October enrollment figures at colleges are usually "peak." Presumably, a number of college students withdraw between October and May of the same academic year. Percentages will vary according to the time enrollment was calculated;
7. The question of whether "academic" program students in colleges intended to transfer to university cannot be answered satisfactorily.

Relating the data in Table 3 with that in Table 2, the following percentages may be calculated.

1. All transfer students in B.C. universities in 1976 as a percentage

of all U.T. students enrolled in all* colleges in 1975-76 ..... 15.4%.

2. All transfer students in B.C. universities in 1976 as a percentage of all* full time U.T. college students in 1975-76 .... 31.4 %.
3. University transfer students from the nine "established" colleges (Camosun, Capilano, Cariboo, Douglas, Malaspina, New Caledonia, Okanagan, Selkirk, V.C.C.) as a percentage of all U.T. students enrolled in the "established" colleges in 1975-76 ..... 16.4%.
4. University transfer students from the nine "established" colleges as a percentage of all full time U.T. students enrolled in the "established" colleges in 1975-76 ..... 31.9%.
5. Transfer "rate" ranged from 24.3% at V.C.C. to 10.0% at the College of New Caledonia (see Table 3).
6. There appeared to be some relationship between transfer "rate" and distance of the colleges from the universities. With some exceptions, the further the college was located from the universities, the lower the transfer "rate."

*Excluding B.C.I.T.

Table 2

Students Entering B.C. Universities with College Transfer Credit for the First Time in September 1976

College Attended	University Entered			
	U.B.C.	U.Vic.	S.F.U.	Total
Camosun	29	109	15	153
Capilano	169	7	87	263
Cariboo	44	21	18	83
Douglas	198	17	162	377
Malaspina	30	59	14	103
New Caledonia	40	17	25	82
Okanagan	87	36	61	184
Selkirk	38	8	10	56
Van. C.C.	746	16	158	920
Fraser V.C.	21	1	7	29
East Kootenay	1	-	-	1
Northwest	1	1	-	2
Northern Lights	1	1	1	3
North Island	-	4	1	5
B.C.I.T.	23	-	-	23
Total	1,428	297	559	2,284

Source: Dennison, J.D., Forrester, G., and Jones G. British Columbia Colleges Articulation Study: Reports 23, 24, 25, B.C. Research, August, 1977.

Table 3

UNIVERSITY TRANSFER STUDENTS AT B.C. COMMUNITY COLLEGES
BY INSTITUTION, BY YEAR, BY ENROLMENT STATUS
FOR OCTOBER 13, 1975

Institution / year, Enrolment Status	1st Year			2nd Year			Total		
	FT	PT	Total	FT	PT	Total	FT	PT	Total
Camosun	379	450	829	25	27	52	404	47.	881
Capilano	884	910	1,794	105	51	156	989	961	1,950
Cariboo	262	337	599	91	60	151	353	397	750
Douglas	1,012	1,601	2,613	313	166	479	1,325	1,767	3,092
East Kootenay	2	253	255	-	-	-	2	253	255
Fraser Valley	249	203	452	12	40	52	261	243	504
Malaspina	332	165	497	152	47	199	484	212	696
New Caledonia	218	407	625	97	115	212	315	522	837
Northern Lights	15	76	91	2	0	2	17	76	93
North Island	23	120	143	0	13	18	23	138	161
Northwest	12	236	248	0	17	17	12	253	265
Okanagan	622	293	915	91	125	216	713	418	1,131
Selkirk	190	144	334	58	17	75	248	161	409
Vancouver	1,744	1,390	3,134	383	272	655	2,127	1,662	3,789
TOTAL	5,944	6,585	12,529	1,329	955	2,284	7,273	7,540	14,813

SOURCE: College Statistical Reports, October 31, 1975.

Table 4

Individual College Data

College	Enrolled at University, First Time, Sept. 1976	U.T. Students at Colleges, October 1975		Percentage Transferring	
		Fulltime	Parttime	of full-time	of all students
Camosun	153	404	477	37.9	17.4
Capilano	263	989	961	26.6	13.4
Cariboo	83	353	397	23.5	11.1
Douglas	377	1325	1767	28.5	12.2
Malaspina	103	484	212	21.3	14.8
New Caledonia	82	315	522	26.0	10.0
Okanagan	184	713	418	25.8	16.3
Selkirk	56	248	161	22.6	13.7
Vancouver	920	2127	1662	43.3	24.3
Total	2221	6958	6577	31.9	16.4
Fraser Valley*	29	261	243	11.1	5.8
East Kootenay*	1	2	253	50.0	0.4
Northwest*	2	12	253	16.7	0.8
Northern Lights*	3	17	76	17.9	3.2
North Island*	5	23	138	21.7	3.1
Grand Total	2261	7273	7540	31.4	15.4

*Colleges so indicated have been established in the last two years.

Hence, transfer rates at this time are premature.

Expressed Intentions of Students Enrolling in "University Transfer" Programs at College

It is extremely difficult to determine the intent of students who enroll in university transfer programs at the colleges. While the assumption has been made that all such students are university-bound, two studies[1,2] conducted during the past five years have suggested that such a conclusion is by no means universally valid.

In 1972, students entering the various post-secondary institutions in B.C. were asked to indicate their plans after leaving college. A total of 7178 students responded, a figure which represented almost half of the first year college students at that time. Of students enrolled in university transfer programs, only 53% stated that they planned to continue full time to university, another 8% indicated that they intended to continue their education while holding a job. A surprisingly large proportion, 14%, had no definite plans.

In 1973, a similar study was conducted as part of a process to assess the socio-economic background of students beginning their post-secondary education. In this study, 13,654 students responded, a figure which represented 56% of all students entering colleges, universities and other institutions in the province that fall.

Of all students officially classified as "university-transfer" in the college system, 44% indicated an intention to continue their education full time, 17% stated that they would work and continue their education and another 14% were undecided between work and further education.

Students who intended to continue their education were also asked to indicate the institution in which they intended to enroll. Of this group 77% nominated the university as their goal.

In both studies, reported above, the total percentage of students intending to continue their education under all conditions was 61%. If this figure is applied to the university-transfer students in Table 4 the re-assessed transfer rates become 52.3% (full time) and 26.9% (all students).

Further, if the transfer rates are based additionally upon the figure of 77% of potential transferees who nominated the university as their goal, the rates become 67.9% (full time) and 34.9% (all students).

Although these observations are somewhat hypothetical, they do throw a different light upon the acceptability of transfer rates.

As a matter of interest, it is useful to note that, in another question which asked students to state their priority in certain frequently quoted objectives of post-secondary education, the following responses were recorded by university-transfer students.

Learning skills that lead to a job 21%

Learning skills and habits used in critical and constructive thinking 25%

Attain satisfactory emotional and social adjustment 17%

Developing a broad general outlook on a variety of subjects 33%

From the limited data available from these studies, certain conclusions are inevitable. Students enrolling in university transfer programs are by no means homogeneous in terms of their educational goals or future plans. A large minority of these students are undecided and, presumably, certain conditions will determine their future choice. These conditions undoubtedly include such factors as financial status, academic success and availability of part-time employment.

Perhaps the most intriguing part of the data is the evidence that less than a quarter of the university transfer students give first priority to the attainment of job skills. The equivalent figure in vocational schools was approximately 60% and at the B.C. Institute of Technology, 48%.

1,2. The Impact of Community Colleges

Working Reports
#3 Opinion Questionnaires
#7 Post-Secondary Student Survey
Published by B.C. Research, Vancouver, 1973

Community College Transfer Students at the Universities

In 1965 the first community college in the province, Vancouver, enrolled students in a university transfer program. In 1966 the first transfer students entered the university from the college, 176 in all. Since that time the number of colleges have increased to fourteen and the number of transfer students at universities has grown rapidly.

While data on all transfer students at all universities are not available, there has been a continuing process of monitoring transfer students at the University of British Columbia, an institution which has enrolled by far the greatest proportion of all college transfers.

The data from U.B.C. are summarized in Table 5. It is clear that while the number of transfer students has increased from 1,646 to 3,690 over a seven-year period, perhaps more interesting has been the increasing proportion of transfer students in the total university enrollment. In 1969, 9.1% of the U.B.C. undergraduate enrollment was college transfers. By 1976, the comparative figure was 18%. Clearly, the college transfers are having an impact of increasing significance upon the university.

By the fall of 1976, the last year on which data are available, the total number of college transfer students at the three public B.C. universities was 6,304 (U.B.C. 3,690, S.F.U. 1,858, U.Vic. 756).

There has been a great deal of interest expressed in the academic performance of college transfer students while at university. It is extremely difficult to make broad generalizations on this question which will be valid and useful. There has been a great deal of study of transfer student performance over the past twelve years and it is clear that variation in performance occurs among colleges from which the students transfer, among the university faculties and departments in which they enter,

Table 5

Community College Transfer Students at U.B.C.

Year	First Time Enrollees	Continuing Enrollees	Total	U.B.C. Undergraduate Enrollment	College Transfer as Percentage of U.B.C. Enrollment
1969	NK	NK	1646	18,080	9.1
1971	NK	NK	1950	17,047	11.4
1972	951	1,333	2,284	16,520	13.8
1973	942	1,351	2,293	17,477	13.1
1974	1,022	1,779	2,801	19,361	14.5
1975	1,191	2,113	3,304	20,220	16.3
1976	1,381	2,227	3,690	20,202	18.3

Source: Dennison, J.D., Forrester, G. and Jones G. British Columbia Colleges Articulation Study, Reports 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 23, 24, 25. B.C. Research, 1971-77.

by year of transfer, by sex, by age, by full time or part-time status and by eligibility of the student to enter university on high school graduation.

In an attempt to summarize some of these differences, the following comments may be made.[3]

1. By comparison with "direct entry" students, transfer students show fewer first class averages, comparable failure rates and a higher percentage of withdrawals from the faculty which they enter.
2. The performance of transfer students tends to improve after their first year of transfer.
3. Up to one half of the transfer student group was academically ineligible to enter university from secondary school. A high percentage of these students succeed at university.
4. "Borderline" transfer students, those who earn less than a 2.5 G.P.A. at college, account for the greatest proportion of the unsuccessful performances on transfer to university.

Data on transfer student performance have been summarized by faculty, by department and by course at university. The prime value of these data lies in the use made of it by individual college departments. The real questions with respect to academic standards in the colleges can only be answered at that level by college faculty involved in the instructional process.

3. (1) Dennison, J.D. et al, The Impact of Community Colleges, B.C. Research, Vancouver, 1975
   (2) Impact of Community Colleges, Working Reports 12, 18, 1976, B.C. Research

In conclusion

What comments might be made on the "university transfer" or "academic" programs of the community college? Any conclusions are very much products of conjecture. The data presented earlier in the paper suggest that, although the greater majority of students electing a transfer program intend to continue their studies at a university, a significant minority do not share such a goal. Presumably, this latter group are either pursuing an interest in academic studies for their own personal satisfaction or are exploring the values of such study without a predetermined objective. Probably, their motivations are based in both options.

However, despite the assumption that the majority of students do intend to take advantage of the transfer route, further comment is justified. The literature on community colleges is well documented with carefully described explanations for their existence. They have been proposed as providing a "cooling out" function - an environment in which students with exaggerated but unrealistic academic goals come to the realization of their real potential. Undoubtedly, many students enter college reflecting ambitions which are more based in their parents' dreams than their own.

College is a safe, respectable choice which delays a career decision and ensures the moral, and often financial, support of their parents and friends. Eventually, many of these young people realize that college is neither the easiest, nor the most enjoyable, course of action and increased maturity leads to the selection of a more suitable alternative. In certain cases the decision to leave the academic stream is made easier because of the limited financial commitment made by going to college--certainly by comparison with the university!

With respect to this discussion, it is interesting to note that a proposal for fourteen years of compulsory education is by no means new. While the suggestion has been associated with the need to remove eighteen-year-olds from the pool of unemployed, the general reaction has been less than favorable.[4]

There is another kind of student population which is enrolled in academic "transfer" programs. These are mature students, many of whom lack extensive formal education. To these people the college represents an opportunity long denied--a route into an academic stream leading to a formal degree and increased earning power.

While many of these mature students find the path to an academic credential is beyond their intellectual, financial or psychological resources, an element of doubt is reasonably satisfied. The gnawing suspicion that they could have done so much better in life, if they "only had the chance," is somewhat ameliorated.

The general impression gained in preparing this paper is that the term "university transfer," when applied to a college program, is very much a misnomer. Clearly, this program serves a wide number of purposes and should be understood in that light. To evaluate such programs by simply focussing upon the number of students who actually transfer to university would be a simplification of the worst kind. On several counts, i.e. community demand, quality of intellectual life; encounter with academic realities; the university-transfer programs are defensible.

There are two extreme views currently held with regard to university transfer programs. The first is that such programs belong entirely in the universities, the other is that all first and second year academic programs should be placed in the colleges, leaving the universities to concentrate on

the senior years. In this writer's opinion neither approach would be desirable. The college programs, as they presently exist, are providing a viable alternative to the university, at lower cost to the student, and under conditions in which many more members of the community may benefit. At the same time those students who would gain most from university retain the opportunity to do so.

Finally, despite the current obsession with vocationalism in higher education; despite the evident unemployability of the liberal arts graduate; despite the limited stream of anti-intellectualism in contemporary thought; the need for liberal education is greater than ever.

In a complex, rapidly evolving society in which technological change produces such anxiety in the work force, when instant communications networks magnify the stresses of everyday life, when greater responsibility than ever is placed upon an informed electorate, the values of a liberal, theoretical and comprehensive education cannot be overestimated.

The academic programs of the community college meet a clientele served by no other institution, offer educational opportunity for a segment of society which has been ignored in the past and provide a major impact upon the quality of life in its immediate community.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

APR 7 1978

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGES

4. Buckley, W.F. Jr., "Keeping Youth at School Won't Create New Jobs," National Review.